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MODERN GERMAN LYRICS

AN INTRODUCTION TO

GERMAN SONGS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

(EDITED BY THE AUTHOR)

BY

ALEXANDER TILLE, PH. D.

LECTURER ON THE GERMAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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DEDICATED

TO

DR. PAUL CLEMEN

CONSERVATOR OF THE MONUMENTS OF ART IN THE RHINE-COUNTRY
PRIVATDOCENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN
AUTHOR OF "DIE KUNSTDENKMÄLER DER RHEINPROVINZ" &C.
KNIGHT OF THE FRANZ JOSEPH ORDER

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF OLD FRIENDSHIP

p 30326

MODERN GERMAN LYRICS

German Songs of Today — it is a vast field, even if "Today" be limited to the past five-and-twenty years and the "German Songs" to the lyrical aspirations of the New German Empire. What are the songs of a time? Those that are sung most and enjoyed most, or those which happen to be produced during a time? In the first the feelings and aspirations of the large masses are shown, and he who tries to study by what tendencies a nation was moved in a particular period will be wise not to ignore the songs it had at heart. In the second are expressed the views and feelings of a few lonely individuals who have the power of uttering in poetry what lives in their minds. If it be true that for the masses a song is born no earlier than when it gets popular, and that thus Schneckenburger's *Wacht am Rhein* may be said to be a product of the Franco-German war of 1870, it is no less true that songs originate when an individual mind creates them, and that thus the *Wacht am Rhein* originated in 1840 from certain feelings and opinions which then prevailed among certain classes of the German nation. From the former point of view we should undoubtedly have to call a certain unknown portion of the lyrics which have been produced within the past twenty-five years, German Songs of Tomorrow. Is it really a pity that we do not know which, and that, in this respect, we can do no more than enjoy what pleases

us best among the lyrical productions of our own age and leave the rest to posterity, just as Merryman does in the Prelude to Goethe's Faust? On the other hand, may that ignorance not make our enjoyment the deeper? Certainly it is a pity that this point of view should be so largely neglected by literary history. Thorough statistics about the songs which appear on prospectuses and are sung in concerts as well as in afternoon and evening society, which appear in cheap song books and are shouted through the streets by marching regiments, which are repeated a hundred times in the nursery and accompany the working man to his labour, and whose melodies are played by wandering bands and whistled by message boys, would give us surprising information about the lyrical taste of our time and show what is the lyrical food of the various classes of our contemporaries. Since every success of a new original work, new songs included, is largely dependent upon the prevalent tendencies and preferences or upon the receptive milieu, such a knowledge would by no means lack practical import. And probably it is neglected merely because everybody believes himself to be fully possessed of it.

It would neither be impossible nor difficult to collect in a small volume all the German songs enjoying the highest popularity among the present generation in Germany; and in such a collection Goethe's finest songs would stand close to the *couplets* of the last *operette* or rather the *operettes* of the last quarter of a century. *Fischerin, du Kleine* would find a place beside *Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*, and *Ach, ich hab sie ja nur auf die Schulter geküsst* beside Mignon's song of Italy's eternal beauty. Goethe, Schiller, Wilhelm Müller, Lenau, Heine, Uhland, Geibel, Scheffel, they all would be represented and with more than one song each, but so would Strauss, Offenbach, Millöcker and Nessler. And their productions would be joined by the relics of the older

Volkslied and curious historical reminiscences of the type of *Prinz Eugenius, der edle Ritter*, and *Kaiser Wilhelm sass ganz heiter*. Such a collection would be both interesting and valuable as a stepping stone towards a knowledge of the tendencies of our time, and it is rather to be regretted that we do not possess anything of the kind. On the other hand, the general results of such a collection could easily be given in a single essay which would convey almost as much information as the whole collection. Besides, the collection would contain numerous poems already well known both at home and abroad. Those not so known would be without special artistic merit and would scarcely serve to cultivate literary taste. Neither would they be of much impressiveness unless their melodies were added — which would be rather an intrusion upon an altogether different field of art. But above all, the picture such a collection could give of contemporary taste would not be complete. It is true it would show the frame of mind of the average German, but it would have to ignore utterly the ideas, feelings and strivings of the greater individuals who are the intellectual and artistic leaders of their age and whose minds, in many respects, represent a state of opinion which the masses will, with due limitations, reach a generation or half a century later. There would be no space in it for the most ingenious lyrical productions of the strongest individualities and the most advanced minds among those contemporary poets, who, in a personal and characteristic form, give poetical expression to those thoughts, feelings and aspirations which are peculiar to their own age and distinguish it from all others. And it is just these things that touch us deepest, make us feel the beating of the heart of our own time and show us its very lifeblood. And it is just the beautiful and strong individuality which gives life and colour and warmth to poetical creations and makes them powerful and at the same time

tender. There was a time, when, among human beings, the herd was almost everything and the individual almost nothing; but that time is past; in spite of all democracy and "natural equality of men" the power and influence of individuals are rapidly increasing instead of being on the decline. And the more we approach modern times the greater mistake is it historically, to neglect that personal element and look at the masses only instead of the productive geniuses.

But that personal element is far from all-powerful. On the contrary, it is very closely limited by the institutions, customs, views and ideals of the time, and in the same way as, from the occurrence of a word like railway, electric engine, doctrine of evolution, social democracy, life assurance, we should at once conclude that the literary work that contains it, must have been written in the nineteenth century and as, in many cases, we could define the time of its origin much more exactly, it is possible to date the growth of thoughts, feelings and strivings, and of intellectual interests, mental movements and changes of taste and to ascribe, by the aid of such arguments, a certain song to a certain period of literature and bring its limits of date of origin within extremely narrow compass. If what is now called *Weltanschauungsgeschichte* in Germany, were somewhat further advanced this would be possible in a still higher degree. Our age, as much as any other, has its specific characteristics, and those poetical productions which show them and are not artificial compounds made up of strange elements from various periods of time, are the true poetry of the age.

It is a well known fact that translations of fiction from a foreign language rarely or never attain a popularity like that of works originally written in the language of a country. The absence of an original style may partly account for that, but the larger cause is certainly the fact that the *Gesammtbewusstsein* of one nation differs from that of another, and

that thus, as it were, the lute strings which the single strokes are intended to strike, are either not struck at all or have a different sound; that a hundred things, words, conceptions, sets of ideas, ideals, feelings, are high aesthetic values in one country and altogether neutral or even low aesthetic values in another. People differ much less in those points which they discuss than in those which they never think of mentioning. Those never pronounced, silently made assumptions or presuppositions the assailing of which is perhaps never thought of in a lifetime, may nevertheless be those most open to assault. Such presumptions are frequently regarded as self-evident in one country while no foreigner would let them pass without challenging their validity. Every work of literature has to make use of them and unconsciously uses the views of its own time, though it be a novel about some old Assyrian princess or a drama from medieval ecclesiastical history. What is true of different countries in one and the same time is still more true of different times within one and the same nation. If by magic we could transfer ourselves into the times of the German War of Liberation we would, in spite of a great sympathy with the people who fought it, feel very strange among them, in view of their conceptions of liberty, dignity, love and wisdom; and if Theodor Körner or De La Motte Fouqué could spend a fortnight in modern Berlin, they probably would not like the modern Fatherland overmuch. A large amount of these unconscious presumptions, as regards lyrics, is bound up with what a nation is in the habit of using as lyrical food, or with lyrical tradition.

Literary tradition is so strong because every writer has to use in the language the same material of words as his predecessors, whilst in other arts tradition consists only in the methods of dealing with given materials which are devoid of prejudicial bias. Tradition is perhaps in no field of lite-

rature stronger than in lyrics. There are traditional metres and traditional rhymes; there is a traditional rhythm; and there are traditional phrases and larger groups of words; there is a traditional technique of style; there are traditional subjects, traditional feelings or frames of mind, traditional views, and even traditional verses, for there are verses which occur three, four and five times in German lyric poetry. Love and nature are said to be the eternal lyric subjects, and that is the reason why lyrics are frequently looked upon suspiciously by serious people. The influence of lyrical tradition must be especially strong in a country which has, in the course of the last century, manifested so powerful a lyrical talent as Germany. Goethe and Heine have, undoubtedly, had the deepest influence on the beginning of a modern lyrical tradition, but Wilhelm Müller, Lenau, Uhland, Geibel, Scheffel have also contributed their parts to it, and it is only natural that the huge mass of the lyrical production in the Germany of to-day still follows the paths they trod. But tradition is not omnipotent either, and the stronger the individuality of the poet the less is its power. Herwegh said:

> Die Zeit ist die Madonna der Poeten,
> Die *Mater dolorosa*, die gebären
> Den Heiland soll; drum halt die Zeit in Ehren,
> Du kannst nichts Höheres als sie vertreten.

But wise sayings of poets are not always obeyed by their fellow-bards, and yet when individual tunes are no more heard in lyrics, modern life is no more reflected in them, lyrical evolution is temporarily at a standstill. The last quarter of a century has, in Germany, in more than one respect, brought to the front quite a new lyric, which, although continuing the lyrical tradition of the past, has added to it a considerable number of new features and appears to bring up a new classic age of the German song.

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It is in that sense that the title of this little book should be understood. "German Songs of Today and Tomorrow", as its heading, means that it includes only specimens of modern German Songs, which are in some way characteristic of our age. It is solely from this point of view that the selection has been made. It is but natural under these circumstances that the tendencies of numerous songs should be mutually contradictory; for unless that allowance be made, no adequate image can be given of the various aspirations of the age. It is, further, but natural that numerous songs should at first sight appear rather strange to British taste. But that would prove merely that, as was to be expected, German taste and British taste are at present, as they always have been, to a certain extent at variance. He who loves German literature will not be deterred by that circumstance, and he who ascribes weight to German intellectual movements and is of opinion that they influence the history of mankind, will rather find in it a stimulus to further study.

Modernism in lyrics may, according to the various aspects of tradition, be of very different kinds. But three principal stages of evolution may be discerned: the subjects may be modern, they may be treated from a modern point of view by means of old symbols and phrases, and the contents may be expressed in modern symbols and phraseology. Among these three stages all kinds of different combinations are possible. The modern labour movement, which is certainly a modern subject, may be treated from the standpoint of the slaveholder and be brought to expression in a sapphic ode and the phraseology of the Oedipus Coloneus; it may be sung in hexameters and with the symbols of the Iliad, it may be handled in doggerel and in the language in which two message boys quarrel and from the same standpoint. It may also be dealt with in the phraseology and from the standpoint of the labour-agitator and in the tune of Schiller's

Wohlauf, Kameraden, aufs Pferd, aufs Pferd; it may be spread over by a certain melancholy resignation or with woeful despair, with social pessimism or social optimism, with the spirit of the conquering or with the spirit of the conquered. Although all these combinations would seem to be equally possible, yet in reality they will appear in a very fixed succession of time, or in other words the subject will, in a fixed order, go through the different stages of literary treatment and give in the long run a very clear expression to the evolution of the whole movement. The song with a purpose always stands first in time. It is poetry only for those whose class hatred and higher aspirations it expresses. For different classes of people and different decades different stages will represent "the beautiful", will be "true poetry".

The evolution of modern German lyric poetry, and more especially the distinction between it and the so called romantic lyric which, in time, immediately preceded it, cannot be understood but by means of a knowledge of the intellectual condition of modern Germany which, to a certain extent, is the same as that of modern Europe. Generally, it is determined by two new mental factors, of which the last century knew very little, viz. by the rapid evolution of natural science and by the entering of social problems into the centre of general interest. By these elements a rapid change in the *allgemeine Weltanschauung* of the more gifted part of the nation took place, a change frequently underrated. It is true it was slowly being prepared for, any time since the sixteenth century, but it is only in our age that questions like these—whether earth is the favourite star and man the favourite child of a divine being, or whether earth is a rather unimportant planet among others and man one mammal among numerous others, — have been finally settled. And such changes cannot possibly remain long without effect on the aesthetic values of a time and must lead to a quick depreciation

of all those intellectual values which were based on the geocentric and anthropocentric conceptions. And the same is true of the part that once was played by speculative philosophy, of the changed social position of women, of the methods of modern production and distribution, of modern commerce and modern education.

Pessimism enters the literatures of Western Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century. It then spreads rapidly and soon reaches some culminating point in romantic poetry, but it remains also after that time the leading motive in lyrics while the novel turns to modern subjects and the drama goes on treating the ethical problems of the eighteenth century. The superficial psychology of modern France is of opinion that all the civilised nations of Europe have entered a period of *décadence* and likes to speak of *fin-de-siècle* as of the beginning of the end. It cannot be denied that a kind of *décadence* is observable within the French nation that is scarcely able to make up for its death-rate by new births. But a phrase like *décadence* or *dégéneration* not only explains nothing, it is, besides, very apt to lead to mistaken historical conclusions regarding our age generally.

The question whether optimism or pessimism is "true", is not a question of philosophical conviction based on argument, but a question of physiological organisation. A person within whom the process of life goes on with easiness and speed will, other things being equal, have a "light soul", will be an optimist, and the bilious man with constant disturbances in his constitution a pessimist, no philosophy in the world being able to change his turn of mind. If invalids, consumptive persons for example, are frequently in good spirits, it is no objection to that theory, but merely a proof that although their constitution tends towards dissolution, the process of life is going on without hindrances and pains and frequently with more than usual speed. But in the case

of Arthur Schopenhauer, the deformed, ugly man with the weak body and the immense head, the ruined digestion and constant bilious attacks, pessimism is the inevitable result of the ilowness and stagnation of the vital process. He is the typical man with a "heavy soul". So far we may follow the physiological explanation of pessimism and may call that doctrine a token of bodily decadence or degeneration. But does the explanation which holds good for exceptionally pessimistic individuals also meet the case of whole ages with a more or less pronounced tendency to a predominance of melancholy motives in literature? History shows that such tendencies may arise very quickly. The literature of the seventeenth century, nay of the first half of the eighteenth century in Germany knows nothing, I might say, of even pessimistic elements. The strong, self-asserting, healthy life with an exuberant wealth of strength and joy and good feeling is its dominant note, and it is only towards the end of the eighteenth century that the pessimistic element comes in. Now did the constitutions of the German and English nations in that time really decline with such rapidity, and what were the causes of that effect? How did the constitution of the German nation so rapidly improve after the middle of the seventies of the current century? In the case of the France of to-day, in which the source of population has ceased to flow there may be a little truth in such a statement, but even there one should be very careful not to overrate it. It is true there seem to be things which point in that direction. The strong godlike figure of Goethe shows pessimism to a far smaller extent than Schiller whose health was very delicate and who was possessed of a natural inclination for brooding. But if we did not know how he came by his elegiac feeling, we might learn it from his own songs. It is not by chance that he, with his whole heart, embraces Platonism, which had been revived in German society from

about 1700 when the contrast between God and the devil was, in the minds of the educated classes, replaced by the contrast between God and the world, between spirit and matter. The poet who sang:

So willst du treulos von mir scheiden . . . . . .

and:

Da ihr noch die schöne Welt regiertet . . . . . .

he who could utter the paradox:

Was unsterblich im Gesang soll leben,
Muss im Leben untergehn. —

he was conscious that, in his age, something was fading away, among the educated classes at least, something with which true poetry seemed to him to be bound up indissolubly; that certain intellectual values though still guarded by the feelings of large circles of the people were depreciated by the progress of thought or, at any rate, had lost their former dominance. A modern Danish thinker[1] has pointed out that opinion evolves a good deal quicker than feeling, but that, notwithstanding, in ethical matters at least, new views do not influence human action until they get into relation with human feelings. Until then they are merely results of reflections, are based on argument, but have not yet become part and parcel of that world of views on the universe and man and life, which is called in German a man's *Weltanschauung*. What is true of ethical opinions, is also true of theoretical views or those beliefs of ours which answer the questions — what is the world like? what is man's position in it? what are his natural aspirations and strivings? It is not by chance that the so called romantic lyric which has prevailed in Europe from about 1770 to almost the present

[1] Harald Höffding in his Ethik, 1887.

day is predominated by a melancholy and sorrowful note and tries to express feelings associated with sadness and disillusionment. It is thus mainly a pessimistic lyric; but pessimism in poetry is a phenomenon inevitably accompanying the dissolution of a *Weltanschauung*; it prevailed when Stoicism and Neoplatonism succumbed to the attacks of Christian beliefs to which both had contributed, and it necessarily prevails at a time when the grand system of medieval thought is breaking down under the attacks of natural science and the requirements of an accelerated social life. A mental struggle of almost four centuries had brought about a sort of reconciliation between medieval Christianity and the world of southern European antiquity and, especially in the field of ethical ideals, the former had been transformed to a large extent by the latter, but, at last that compromise, in which Lessing and Schiller indulged and which Goethe never got beyond; — hard as he tried to do so — served only to shake that gigantic monument which had been built up by medieval clericalism; and thus it facilitated the performance of the task which rationalism had set for itself.

Goethe lived long enough to see enter into life two forces, natural science and the modern social movement, the latter of which was the immediate product of the acceleration of the process of social life, brought about by the application on a large scale of manufacturing, by the acceleration of the circulation of the means of existence and by the acceleration of social selection and elimination immediately resulting from it. His genius tried to master both subjects poetically. But he failed, and it is not too much to say that his creative power broke down in the attempt to treat poetically the new world opened up by modern scientific investigation and to master artistically the new social problems, which the evolution of industry and exchange had brought to the front. He tried, and that more than once. But the *Metamorphose der Pflanzen* and the

Metamorphose der Tiere remained two didactic essays which the lady to whom they were dedicated could scarcely have understood. And one need only compare Goethe's letter to Schiller of August 29, 1795, in which he not only clearly observes the transition from handicraft to manufacturing in Ilmenau, but sees its overwhelming importance, with the impotent attempt to draw a picture of the life of the Swiss weaving and spinning population in Leonardo's Diary in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, in order to understand that it was beyond the faculties of his time to accomplish that task. It is not the impotency of old age which hinders Goethe's doing justice to these problems—for in 1797 one can scarcely call him an old man, and in other fields he possessed for a good while after he had written the story of the nut-brown girl, the faculty of expressing clearly and beautifully what he had perceived and what he embraced with his feeling. It is here that the difference lies. He saw both the *naturwissenschaftliche Weltanschauung* and the modern social life, but their distinct items had not become firm aesthetic values for his consciousness, they did not awaken in him that storm of excitement and eloquent enthusiasm with which the contrast between our instincts and our moral conviction in Faust or the humane ideals of Iphigenia are able to inspire him. In consequence he is lacking in a sense for what is exactly characteristic and what is irrelevant, nor does he feel what is beautiful and what is ugly and unconsciously describe it as such, but he adds to his colourless story critical remarks on his subject.

The same social process which changed the relations between the ruling and the ruled so fundamentally and which led to the establishment of the claims for equal rights on the side of the lower classes brought to the front the wage-earning woman of whom the early part of the eighteenth century had known very little. The ever increasing indi-

vidualism which, at the time of the Reformation, had failed to touch the inferior position of women created through the influence of the medieval doctrine that woman was the origin of all evils for man and a *cloaca diabolorum*, at last extended to women also, who in the higher circles of society had already for a century played an important part. The opportunity of a better education did more, although Greek antiquity was decidedly against a social equality of both sexes. About the middle of the eighteenth century morality, as regards the relations of the sexes, underwent a rapid change in German poetry, and chiefly in the novel. The German drama of the latter half of the seventeenth century had been very liberal as to the relations of the sexes within and without matrimony, but now a strange external or superficial formalism as to matrimonial morality began to prevail. Gellert's novel *Leben der Schwedischen Gräfin von G*** is the best sample of it, and it is a further proof of the rapidity of the evolution of ethical problems in the time following, that only two generations passed between that novel (1747) and Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809), which, for the first time, proclaimed the opinion that only that matrimony is moral which is based on mutual personal love, and that it becomes immoral as soon as that presumption is lost on either side. It is only too natural that such a change in the ethical ideals of a time must affect lyrics the eternal subject of which has been said to be love. It must raise the position of the loved one, proclaim a new ideal of female beauty and amiability and tend to a rehabilitation of the moral purity of sound love of the sexes which by medieval ethical theories had been shaken, nay, almost destroyed. It must first justify the intimate relations of love before the moral tribunal and, as soon as that justification has taken place in a larger number of minds, it must lead to the result that the old way of condemning these most natural and

beautiful feelings and longings as immoral, is itself immoral. In the long journey of evolution, of course, all sorts of exaggerations and misconceptions like "free love" or general promiscuity appear, and in particular the modern novel with its strong tendency to the experimental leads to distortions like Gutzkow's *Wally, die Zweiflerin* (1835). "Emancipation of the flesh" is the name given to that school of thought by the reaction from the medieval point of view. As far as the thing can be expressed in medieval phraseology this designation is not a bad one. But in the forum of modern scientific knowledge that name does not hold good. For we no longer think it right to divide the thinking power of our brain from its feeling or loving power and call the one spirit and the other flesh. Either both are spirit or both are flesh, and modern scientific monism — for which soul is identical with the vital process and is a movement consequently and no longer a matter — knows only of living matter and no longer of an aggregate of dead matter and "spirit". The ever increasing number of women who by means of their own work or inherited wealth were socially independent, worked in the same direction and tended to replace the ideal of the girl obedient, weak, and humble to her master by the new ideal of the girl strong, alert and faithful to her male comrade in life. Fidelity which before had been a female virtue only enforced by socially stronger men, evolved into a mutual fidelity which bound man as well as woman.

Goethe's love poetry denotes a remarkable stage in that course of evolution. It shows the freedom from the old ecclesiastical fetters even to a larger extent than his life did, but it has not yet found the new stability which is based on man's feeling of personal love. And his female ideal is still strongly under the influence of that *Weltanschauung*, of which he has freed himself in other respects. Neither has

Heine got beyond that ideal and the circle of feelings bound up with it. His feelings were still completely under the power of the old conceptions, although his criticism had led his opinions a little further. Thus he was at once able to express the old subjects in the most beautiful form and to mock at them. But he was impotent to build up a new poetry out of new high aesthetic values which were preparing in his age; and there he stands at the threshold of two ages, not a pioneer like Goethe and yet with a command of all the technical means of the lyric of the age that is drawing near its end, and consequently with a power of expression without its like in his lifetime.

The old world of medieval conceptions was past, the *Anschauungswelt* of the Greco-Roman antiquity no longer held good in view of the infinitely more complicated conditions of modern social life, the position of woman in the consciousness of the time and the scientific discoveries of the import of the conservation of energy, the doctrine of evolution and of the revival of theories like atomism and heredity. The old high aesthetic values were depreciated, new ones had not yet been formed, what was more natural than that the lyrics of the time should turn to the lamentation that much had been lost and that the present was void of anything high and great? Lost ideals, lost love, lost fame of the Fatherland, lost belief, lost hope, lost happiness, lost joy of life, lost prospects for a life in another world — these are the themes of romantic lyric. It is a lyric of resignation and partly of self-sacrifice. It is true it seems to us still to be bound up with what is the most beautiful and sublime for our mind, but is nevertheless a lyric devoted to what is past and will scarcely inspire anybody to great deeds.

The first step of lyrics beyond the domain of resignation and grief over what is irrevocably lost in a social respect is taken in the political songs of so called Young Germany

which centre in the poetry of 1848. In the songs of Gottschall,[1] Scherr[2] and Jordan[3] which are almost contemporary with the songs of Heine, Herwegh, Dingelstedt, Freiligrath, political liberalism or radicalism appears in a close connection with a longing for a freer life of love and a throwing off of all beliefs in a supernatural world, or with religious radicalism, although all three find expression in a merely negative or critical way. Exhortations to give up political slavery, love prejudices and religious superstition still occupy the largest space.

> Wirf Götter und Götzen über Bord,
> Dann frisch ans Steuer getreten;
> *Errungen* nur wird der Freiheitsport,
> Nicht erbetet und nicht erbeten!

That is a typical utterance and it is very significant that Wilhelm Jordan was punished with a six weeks imprisonment for reciting that song[4]. From the same volume a few lines in favour of a new love-morality may be quoted[5]:

> Lässt sich die böse Staarhaut nimmer stechen,
> Die alte Blindheit, welche sittlich nennt,
> Was an der Zukunft ist ein schwer Verbrechen,
> Die weiss den Mord zu einer Tugend brennt?
> Die Liebe frei, frei wie das Licht der Sonnen,
> Draus jede Scholle einen Keim empfängt . . . . . .

Other cases show no less clearly the progress of thought in the first half of the nineteenth century. The second

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[1] Lieder der Gegenwart, and Zensurflüchtlinge. Königsberg, and Zürich 1842.
[2] Laute und leise Lieder, Schaffhausen 1842.
[3] Schaum, Leipzig 1846.
[4] Der Schiffer und der Gott in Schaum, p. 129.
[5] Liebesgedichte, romantisch und modern. Nr. 4 in Schaum p. 223.

classical period of German literature had found its inspiration in that well known blending of the ideals of medieval Christianity and Greek antiquity by which the latter half of the eighteenth century was characterised. Its conceptions of guilt, expiation, renunciation, honour, monarchism, murder and war and many other thoughts of that stage of mental development found beautiful classical expression in the masterpieces of that period. Schiller wrote, in strict accordance with the views of his age, in his *Braut von Messina* the often quoted words:

> Das Leben ist der Güter grösstes nicht,
> Der Übel grösstes aber ist die Schuld,

and he scarcely foresaw, how quickly this view would be replaced by another. In the forties of the nineteenth century Robert Prutz wrote in his historical drama *Moritz von Sachsen:*

> Das Leben ist des Lebens höchstes Gut,
> Zu wandeln schon, zu atmen ist ein Glück.
> Es giebt kein andres Unglück als den Tod,
> Weil er allein unwiderruflich ist.

a line of thought which was, later on, carried a good deal further by Friedrich Nietzsche, who, in opposition to Schopenhauer, declared all speculations about the value of life to be nonsense, a standpoint outside of life from which alone the question could be settled being for obvious reasons impossible.

Schiller had written:

> Drum soll der Sänger mit dem König gehen,
> Sie beide wohnen auf der Menschheit Höhen!

and Ferdinand Freiligrath said:

> Mit dem Volke soll der Dichter gehen,
> Also les' ich meinen Schiller heut!

It had been the belief and the motto of the Rousseau age:

> Die Menschen sind einander gleich geschaffen
> Sie sind begabt mit angebornen Rechten!

and not much later another view came to the front:

> Zwei Rassen giebts; die eine wird mit Sporen,
> Mit Sätteln wird die andere geboren.[1]

The movement of Young Germany, in which strong revolutionary tendencies, religious radicalism, a longing for social reform by means of force, and the consciousness of a higher morality had united, was too overcharged with explosive power not to strike far beyond the mark. It led to extremes in every respect and thus it practically attained nothing although the remote ideals it had held up were not lost entirely. They retired, however, from lyrical poetry. The revolution of 1848 had proved a failure, the attempt to erect a new German Empire under the guidance of Prussia had proved a failure, the religious movement of the forties which was already believed to be the start of a new reformation, had proved a failure, while, at the same time, the old ideals, monarchical, absolutist, ecclesiastical, ethical faded away. Even Hegel's philosophy was no longer able to supply the time with a consolation for all these losses, and thus it happened that pessimism, which had found a prophet in Arthur Schopenhauer as early as 1819, became a kind of popular philosophy in the sixties. It announces itself by the fact that in 1859 *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* has to be issued in a new edition and finds a rapid expression in the pessimistic or, at any rate, very melancholy novels of Theodor Storm, Friedrich Spielhagen, Wilhelm Raabe and Wilhelm Jensen, and the pessimistic lyrics of Storm, Jensen,

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[1] Karl Kösting. Der Weg nach Eden. Leipzig 1884.

Heinrich Leuthold, Eduard Grisebach, Dranmor (Ferdinand von Schmidt) and Ada Christen (Christiane von Neupauer, *née* Friederik). Eduard Grisebach's anonymous collection of lyrics *Der Neue Tanhäuser* of 1869 opens that decidedly pessimistic series, and has had an influence on German lyrics of the time that followed as no other work since Heine's *Buch der Lieder*. It is because of this influence, that it has not been excluded from the present collection although it does not properly belong to the lyrics of the New German Empire. In it Schopenhauer's influence is only too evident:

> Friedberger Kirchhof! mein vergnügtes Wandern
> Durchs rosige Sein ward hier zur Pilgerfahrt:
> Hier ruht *ein Mann!* er war nicht wie die andern,
> Und eine Thräne rinnt mir in den Bart . . . . . .

> Ein schwarzer Marmor! Schnee und Regenschauer
> Verlöschten fast der Lettern goldnen Glanz,
> Den stolzen Namen: *Arthur Schopenhauer* —
> Zu Häupten lag ein welker Lorbeerkranz.

Occasionally that strong undertone of sorrow at the loss of the old ideals (*e. g.* as expressed in *Leuchtend aus dem Lindengrün* of the present collection) not only turns into a lament over the alleged materialistic tendencies of the age, which is supposed to pursue material success only, but exalts pessimism in its most pronounced form as the doctrine of self destruction into an ideal, into the ideal of the poet. It denounces the modern spirit of intellectual progress which has destroyed the dear old phantoms, the products of the imagination of three thousand years and left nothing in their place but hopelessness and misery. The *Neue Tanhäuser* even borrows from old master Eckart the motto: "A Creature's delight is mixed with bitterness" — and complains of

the imperfection of human nature, wherever health and strength are longing for their rights and do not yield to the inexorable decree of self-renunciation.

It was not till somewhat later, in 1878, that theoretic pessimism, increased by the sad events of a spoiled life and expressed in the most beautiful classical forms of Goethe and Platen made its appearance in German lyrics. In that year Jacob Bächtold edited the poems of unhappy Heinrich Leuthold, who on the 1st of July of 1879 died in a lunatic asylum in his native Switzerland. They had a certain literary influence in the time that followed, but when they appeared, the wave of theoretic pessimism was just passing away and another phase, social pessimism, came up, which preferred as subjects the dreary lot of the lower part of the working class. Thus they failed to have the full effect they would have had, had they been issued previous to the *Neue Tanhäuser*. Pessimism as a theoretic *Weltanschauung* does not die out so quickly in German literature, but lives on even till the eighties and nineties. It finally arrives at the conclusion, that life is merely a step to infinite misery and it is better never to be born:[1]

> Im Keim erstickt wird eine Welt voll Jammer
> Mit jeder Mädchenleiche; eine Welt
> Voll Weh wird wach geküsst, wenn in der Kammer
> Der Brautkranz und mit ihm der Schleier fällt.

The first impulse to overcome pessimism as a *Weltanschauung* was given by the Franco-German war of 1870 and the erection of the New German Empire, which was followed by an immense raising of patriotic feeling among the German nation. A new classical period of German lite-

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[1] Karl Kösting. Der Weg nach Eden, Leipzig 1884.

rature was generally expected, and the war-like songs of numerous poets were regarded as the beginning of it. Yet the best of these move entirely within the old traditional style and mode of thought, which characterises the poetry of the War of Liberation. Even Geibel's *Am dritten September* 1870 is no exception.[1]

Nun lasst die Glocken von Turm zu Turm
Durchs Land frohlocken im Jubelsturm,
Des Flammenstosses Geleucht facht an!
Der Herr hat Grosses an uns gethan.
Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe!

In November 1859 Charles Darwin's work *On the origin of species* had appeared, which almost immediately began to transform not only biological science but also the general *Weltanschauung* of the educated classes. Both the tempest of opposition it aroused and the equally vehement support it met with, helped to its success. The same thing which by the hypotheses of Kant and Laplace had been shown for the universe at large and by Lyell's works for the history of the inorganic world of the earth, was, thereby, proved for organic nature, and this change, through the medium of Huxley's *Evidences as to Man's Place in Nature*, almost at once precipitating man from that pedestal on which his ignorance had placed him, made him merely a brother of the higher branches of mammalia. It was only by Darwin's hypothesis that the modern building of natural science received its final touches, and the modern *Weltanschauung* its safe centre. Since the days of the discovery of America and the work of Copernicus and Kepler science had been

[1] Emanuel Geibel's gesammelte Werke, Stuttgart 1883, Vierter Band p. 250.

busy destroying the cathedral of medieval mythology, and attempting to erect a new tower instead. The time when light, colour, life, soul, sound, lightning were regarded as superhuman substances, and mountains, rivers, human faculties and qualities, desires and ideals as eternal and invariable, passed slowly away, and the place of superhuman substance was taken by certain processes or forms of motion, and the place of eternity and invariability by evolution. Such a change could not fail to be of the most serious consequence in the modification of men's expressions, feelings, desires, aspirations, morals, ideals and even actions, in fact of whatever is of aesthetic value for modern man. Aesthetic values, or conceptions which are invariably bound up with certain feelings, are the building stones of poetry, and thus changes in these matters cannot take place without affecting the poetry of a time just as even the style of a building is largely influenced by the material out of which it is constructed. But poetry being very conservative and possessing its own written tradition such changes go on very slowly, even more slowly than the depreciation of old aesthetic values. Thus a poetry which aimed at representing modern life in the light of the new scientific conception of the world, at utilising the new aesthestic values at its materials, and at looking at life from the standpoint of new ethical ideals which were furnished by that conception, made its appearance in different countries at very different times. Frequently *e. g.* in the field of political poetry, a poetry with a pronounced purpose makes the beginning and it is only after a while that poets take the new advanced opinions as the self-evident basis of their work, considering it no longer necessary to preach or to defend their new standpoint. And this holds good specially in German literature which at all times has concerned itself to so large an extent with the evolution of mental life and the development of the aspect of the natural world, which

is offered by tradition, revelation, foreign literatures or science.

It was only in the eighteenth century that Copernicus theory of the universe entered German literature. It was through Haller that natural science and poetry were brought into contact. Since then, occasionally, scientific subjects were treated even in lyrics, and when, towards the middle of the present century, by numerous excavations a whole world of fossil relics was brought to light, it was, in 1867, with much humour introduced into the poetry of students' songs by Victor von Scheffel:[1]

Es rauscht in den Schachtelhalmen,
Verdächtig leuchtet das Meer,
Da schwimmt, eine Thräne im Auge,
Ein Ichthyosaurus daher.

Ihn jammert der Zeiten Verderbnis,
Denn ein sehr bedenklicher Ton
War neuerlich eingerissen
In der Liasformation . . . . . .

Darwinism entered German lyrics as early as 1871, not as a pale theory laboriously worked into metre, but as a full, living contemplation of organic nature, as a new gospel connected with the exulting optimism of the strong, healthy, self-asserting man, who is proud of the toilsome ascent of his species that has successfully fought out its fight for the means of existence through millions of years and will reach a still higher perfection in a remote future. It was Wilhelm Jordan who introduced the new *Weltanschauung* of evolution

[1] Gaudeamus, Lieder aus dem Engeren und Weiteren. Stuttgart 1867 p. 5.

into German lyrics by his collection of songs *Strophen und Stäbe* of 1871. Of Darwin he says:[1]

Er hats greiflich klar wie niemand
Ausgespürt und aufgezeigt,
Wie und welche tausend Pfade
Sacht empor das Leben steigt,
Ich nur aller Pfade Richtung
Aus des Dichters Vogelschau
Überblickt, erahnt in ihnen
Ziel und Plan im Weltenbau.

Wie — so lautet *seine* Frage —
Stärken, steigern Hunger, Tod?
Meine: — was erlöset weiter
Gott in uns aus Neid und Not?
So vom Baum des Lebens pflückten
Beide wir dieselbe Frucht:
Ihm des Wissens, mir der Weisheit
Allerhöchstes ist die *Zucht*.

Six years later he gave to his nation another book, the finest work of his life and the highest expression of his poetical power: *Andachten*[2], in which he already embraces the new *Weltanschauung* with the whole intensity of the feelings of the preacher at the hearth, who gives expression to his new knowledge no longer as a learning just acquired, but as his holiest convictions, part and parcel of himself, indissolubly connected with his whole existence. It is his greatest disappointment that German theology stands by with its face averted and does not take the hand of science offered to it. A reconciliation of the old religious feelings with the scientific conception of the world is his ideal, and

[1] Strophen und Stäbe, Frankfurt a. M. 1871, p. 209.
[2] Andachten von Wilhelm Jordan, Frankfurt a. M. 1877.

he would willingly give away anything if, at that price, he could get that reconciliation. He tried, but did not succeed. German established churches fail to see that it would be to their advantage to accept the new revelation of science instead of assailing it, and the poet mourns that, in consequence, the authority of the clergy is decaying more and more every day. The responsibility for this he throws on the representatives of religion and he attacks them in his own way:

Ihr leugnets keck, dass sich das Ewigwahre
Dem Menschengeiste weiter offenbare,
Und neuer Offenbarung neue Sprüche
Sind euch nur Giftgebräu der Teufelsküche.

Ihr seid zu stumpf, zu faul, von ihr zu lernen,
Was sie von Erde, Sonne, Mond und Sternen,
Vom Stufengang des Lebens auf der Bahn
Allmäliger Entfaltung dargethan.

Ihr predigt fort vom menschenhaften Schöpfer,
Seid lieber Thon, geformt von ihm, dem Töpfer,
Als Schritt um Schritt mit schwer erkämpften Siegen
Vom Wurm empor zum Menschentum gestiegen . . . . . .

Ihr macht für Heiliges die Herzen kühler;
Schon mehr als ihr von Humboldt weiss der Schüler,
Und höhnisch thut er mit dem Dunkelmann
Der welken Schale lautern Kern in Bann.

Ihr Päpstlein mit und ohne Syllabus,
Ihr brietet, ging es nur, noch heut den Huss,
Und sperrtet alle Wissensmehrer ein —
Und ihr wollt heute noch die Lehrer sein?

It was very little later, in 1886, that a young writer, the greatest lyrical genius alive today in Germany, gave expression to the positive part of this new *Weltanschauung*.[1]

Der Lenzwind liess die Äste knarren,
Vom Dorf herüber klang die Uhr,
Ich lag begraben unter Farren
Und stammelte: Natur! Natur!

In alten Büchern steht geschrieben,
Du bist ein Weib, ein schönes Weib;
Ich bin ein Mensch und muss dich lieben,
Denn diese Erde ist dein Leib!

Weh jenem bleichen Nazarener!
Er stiess dich kalt von deinem Thron!
Ich aber bin so gut wie jener
Der Gottheit eingeborner Sohn!

Ich will nicht mönchisch dich zergeisseln —
Her, deinen Freudenthränenwein!
Ich will dein Bild in Feuer meisseln
Und Vollmensch wie ein Grieche sein!

In the same sense, nine years later, Johannes Grosse bids good bye to all the hopes that go beyond the grave[2]

Ich stelle wiederum die Frage:
Was soll ich thun, dass ich selig werde?
Und hebe an die Klage:
Warum, warum nicht auf der Erde?

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[1] Arno Holz, Das Buch der Zeit. Lieder eines Modernen. Zürich 1886, p. 253.
[2] Johannes Grosse. Buch der Erinnerungen. Strassburg i. E. 1895, p. 216.

What asceticism could not comprehend nor value rightly was human love, and yet it is the eternal centre and source of life [1]

> Denn die Schöpfung neuer Leben
> Schreitet machtvoll durch die Runde:
> Lieb' empfangen, Liebe geben,
> In der heilgen Schöpfungsstunde.

In the beginning of the eighties among the literary youth of Germany the consciousness quite slowly awakens, that the old ideals are waning, but instead of looking round for new ideals, poets try to depict in their writings "life as it is". Hence the term "Realism". In reality, of course, they do nothing of the kind. They see life not only through their temperament but also through the glasses of the ideas they have inherited and describe less their impressions than express their views. But, on the other hand, the purpose to communicate in poetry one's own impressions leads to a more comprehensive study of modern life and the modern conditions of existence as well as of the mental milieu of the time. Thus vast fields of subjects are opened up to literature: the novel extends rapidly over disease, misery, crime, the drama takes up ethical problems in their relation to hypocrisy, morbid conditions of life, impotency and hereditary illness and insanity, and lyrics treat of the varions aspects of *modern life* with its thousandfold phenomena and its ever increasing differentiation under the effect of division of labour, of the sufferings of the working class, of life in the factories, of the modern large towns with the pomp in their shop-windows and the misery in their east-ends, of the social life of the rich, of the world of the nursery, of the study of the

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[1] Johannes Grosse. Buch der Erinnerungen. Strassburg i. E. 1895, p. 214.

scholar, of electioneering, of astronomical discoveries, of the lot of the modern poet, of the tragedy of railway accidents; of *modern love* as being under the influence of the new social conditions and ethical ideals of the age, of the dreary love of the starving, of modern flirtation in brilliant drawing rooms, of matrimonial love, of love-faith and love-hypocrisy, of reckless seeking and faithless leaving, of dying love and dying lovers, of love quarrels and love repentance, of the new ideal of female beauty and worthiness; of *modern thought* with its strong tendency towards a scientific monistic conception of the world, as it is taught by Ernst Haeckel[1], and the evolutional utilitarianism in the field of ethics as it is represented by Jordan and Nietzsche, of the struggle for existence in nature and human life, of the new gospel of evolution, of the struggles between science and religion, of doubt and faith, and of the waning of the belief in a personal immortality, nay of a belief in God, and of the wilful breaking down of all kinds of voluntary limitations.

In the forefront of interest stands modern life with its social tendencies. Arno Holz calls up the German poets:[2]

Und dräut auch manche Wolke
Euch schwarz am Horizont,
O haltet treu zum Volke,
Ihr habts noch nie gekonnt!
Nach ihm streckt seine Krallen
Siebenfach die Not;
Der schrecklichste von allen
Ist doch der Kampf ums Brot.

[1] Ernst Haeckel. Der Monismus als Band zwischen Religion und Wissenschaft. Glaubensbekenntnis eines Naturforschers. Bonn 1893. Vierte Auflage.

[2] Das Buch der Zeit. Zürich 1886, p. 170.

It is he who opens up the life of the working class to modern lyrics, he who finds the poetical aspect of the labour leader's working and suffering[1]

Ich seh' ihn Tag für Tag, als wäre nichts geschehn,
Still mit dem Glockenschlag an seine Arbeit gehn;
Das Halstuch rot wie Blut, von Locken wirr umflogen,
Den Calabreserhut tief in die Stirn gezogen . . . . . .

Under the pen of the modern poet the life of the modern *Weltstadt* begins to live in verses:[2]

Wie das Leben so voll und so wogend rollt
In der Weltstadt hochklopfenden Adern,
Wo Wagen an Wagen hinunter rollt
Auf sprühenden Pflasterquadern!
Von Gesicht zu Gesicht
Das Laternenlicht
Hüpft flackernd vorüber,
Gespenstisch, als läg alles Leben im Fieber.

The brothers Hart go still further. Their poetry penetrates into the conditions of modern social existence with its manifold correlations:

" . . . . Nicht wehe den Gerichteten! Ich sage:
Wehe den Richtern! Weh allen, die das Schwert
Ausstrecken und des Rechtes schwere Wage
In schwachen Menschenhänden führen; es zehrt
An *aller* Mark der Sünde flammend Feuer.
Ein *jeder* ist verschuldet *jeder* That

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[1] Das Buch der Zeit. Zürich 1886, p. 163.
[2] B. Johannes Grosse. Buch der Erinnerungen. Strassburg i. E. 1895, p. 49.

Und trägt auf seiner Seele ungeheuer,
Was jeder je an Schuld und Frevel that.
Ihr stosst den einen tief hinab in Nacht,
Den anderen hebt ihr empor zum Licht;
Lehrt ihr die Blinden, was sie sehend macht?
Und trocknet ihr der Weinenden Gesicht?"

The German realistic movement dates from 1882. It was in that year that the two brothers Heinrich and Julius Hart began to issue their series *Kritische Waffengänge.* Directly inspired by this in the summer of 1883 a small literary circle gathered round the two brothers at Berlin, consisting almost entirely of students at the University and reaching the number of about twenty. The brothers Hart were the leading spirits, and the more distinguished members were Wilhelm Arent, Karl Henckell, Hermann Conradi, Arno Holz and Otto Erich Hartleben. Lyric poetry was the proper field of all of them, and being unable to find a publisher for their productions, in the autumn of 1884 they published under the title of *"Moderne Dichtercharaktere"* a collection of their poems and sent it post free to anybody who cared for it. In 1886 a second edition was issued under the title of *"Jungdeutschland"*[1]. It is largely devoted to the lyric of so-called social pessimism, which is thus introduced by Wilhelm Arent:

Ein freudlos erlösungheischend Geschlecht,
Des Jahrhunderts verlorene Kinder,
So taumeln wir hin! wes Schmerzen sind echt?
Wes Lust ist kein Rausch? wer kein Sünder? . . . .

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[1] Jungdeutschland. Unter Mitwirkung von Hermann Conradi und Karl Henckell, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Arent. Zweite Auflage. Friedenau (Berlin) und Leipzig. 1886.

Selbstsucht treibt alle, wilde Gier nach Gold,
Unersättlich Sinnengelüste,
Keinem einzigen ist Mutter Erde hold —
Rings graut nur unendliche Wüste!

The same intensity of feeling that centres round social problems and the social life of our age, finds expression in the songs devoted to modern love and the modern woman. In this field Arno Holz is surpassed as regards passion and power both by Julius Hart and Johannes Grosse. It is the latter who addresses a modern Brynhild:[1]

In dir wohnt ein Brynhildengroll,
Im Auge dir Brynhildgedanken;
Dein Körper ragt so kühn, so voll
Und ledig alles Weichlichkranken
Im Busen schwillt dir heisse Kraft,
Wie drängend, um ein Kind zu säugen
Die ganze Seele — Leidenschaft —
Und muss sich vor dem Zwange beugen,
Gefesselt an den kranken Mann,
Den deine Brust kaum wärmen kann . . . . . .

Du warst zu einer seltnen Frau
Geboren, würdig für das Grosse,
Verkümmert nun, wie ohne Tau
Des Himmels siecht die heisse Rose.
Wär dir ein Herz erweckt zur That
Und eine Wahlstatt dir geboten,

[1] Johannes Grosse. Buch der Erinnerungen. Strassburg im Elsass 1895, p. 65/66.

Und wär' ein Siegfried dir genaht,
Wie Frühling mit dem Liebesoden,
Der Leben haucht und Leben schafft:
Dann wär' entfaltet deine Kraft.

In 1885 M. G. Conrad of München founded a realistic monthly *Die Gesellschaft. Realistische Monatsschrift für Literatur, Kunst und öffentliches Leben* in which he largely cultivated lyrics. So did Karl Emil Franzos in the fortnightly *Deutsche Dichtung*, which he founded in 1887 and L. M. Kafka in the *Moderne Dichtung, Monatsschrift für Literatur und Kritik*, founded in 1890 and named *Moderne Rundschau* in 1891. These three journals have been the centres of publication for lyrics, the *Deutsche Dichtung* more for the old-idealistic and romantic lyric, the two others for impressionistic or generally modern lyric. The characteristic features of realistic or impressionistic lyrics are that they no longer regard human actions in the light of the perception of transcendent guilt and transcendent atonement; of enthusiasm for manslaughter; of the immutable binding of a promise; of the fruitless despair following from some unimportant mistake; of the belief in the irrevocability of human actions; and of the faculty of man to will anything he may choose. These things are occasionally mixed with the opinion that there are no longer moral standards at all, that the recognition of the laws of nature has put an end to the moral world. It is the theory of poetry Zola has given in *Le Roman expérimental*, according to which the function of the poet is simply to depict what he sees around him he being simply a photographer.

Having reached that point of distinctness and clearness that theory could not fail to be overcome. So it was in 1889. "*L'art pour l'art.* — The struggle against purpose in art is always a struggle against the moralising tendency

in art, against its subordination under morals. *L'art pour l'art* means: to the devil with morals! But even that hostility betrays the overgreat power of the prejudice. If the purpose of preaching morals and improving men has been excluded from art, it does not, therefore, follow that art is altogether purposeless, aimless, senseless; shortly *l'art pour l'art*, a serpent that bites its own tail. Rather no purpose at all than a moral purpose. Thus speaks mere passion. The psychologist, however, asks; what is art's work? Does it not praise? does it not glorify? does it not select? does it not draw to light? With all that, it *strengthens* or *weakens* certain valuations. Is that merely something occasional? some chance? something in which the artist's instinct does not take any part? Or is it not rather the presumption for a *posse* of an artist? . . . ."[1]

Early in the seventies a young professor of Humanity in the University of Basel, Switzerland, named Friedrich Nietzsche, had in two, "inopportune contemplations" celebrated Schopenhauer as an educator and his follower Richard Wagner as the star of Baireuth. It was just the time of the last phase of German pessimism, and the pamphlets met with a certain success. But when their author afterwards, in a number of publications, turned to ethical problems his public got more and more limited, and even when in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, in the controversy *Zur Genealogie der Moral* and in his oriental prose poem after the fashion of the Tripitaka *Also sprach Zarathustra* in 1886 he reached the summit of his work, he did not secure a large circle of readers. It was not until 1888, when Nietzsche, in a pamphlet *Der Fall Wagner* suddenly turned against the musician of Baireuth whom he before had praised, that public attention was directed towards him. And when, soon after the publication

[1] Nietzsche. Götzendämmerung, Leipzig 1889, § 26.

of *Götzendämmerung oder wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert*, the news came that the hermit of Sils Maria had been attacked by a very serious nervous disturbance leading to permanent madness and confinement in a lunatic asylum, the general interest turned rapidly to his works. From 1889 the German journals are full of Nietzsche, and more especially the literary monthlies like M. G. Conrad's *Gesellschaft*[1], L. M. Kafka's *Moderne Dichtung*[2], Brahm's and Bölsche's *Freie Bühne*[3] conmmented largely on his life and works. Hermann Conradi's *Lieder eines Sünders*[4] are the first collection of songs to show Nietzsche's influence on German Lyrics. *Triumph des Übermenschen* the song is called, in which the young poet sings[5]:

> Sterblicher! Sprich mit der Ewigkeit!
> Sterne geben dir ihr Geleit —
> Brennen auf deinen Scheitel nieder —
> Giessen Ströme des Segens aus:
> *Daseinsfreude* hebt die Lider —
> Türmet die Quadern des neuen Baus.

Nietzsche replaces under Jordan's influence the exaltation of happiness as the higher good, the ideal of eudaemonistic utilitarianism, by the ideal of a higher development of the human race, which is directly derived from the theory of evolution. Such a higher development is possible only by a preservation of the stronger and a weeding out of the weaker, or by a keeping alive of social selection. The stronger have by their

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[1] München 1885 and 1886, Leipzig 1887 ff.
[2] Leipzig, Brünn, Wien 1890. Since 1891 under the title Moderne Rundschau.
[3] Berlin 1890 and 1891 (weekly), 1892 and 1893 (monthly). Since 1894 under the title Neue Deutsche Rundschau.
[4] Leipzig (1887).
[5] p. 145.

strength the right of preservation, the weaker by their feebleness the duty of dying out. The first live thus under a master-morality, the latter under a slave-morality, which, from the instinct of self preservation, preaches protection of the weak. In the present time the latter have, to a certain extent, succeeded in making the strong live under the slave-morality also. The weak call evil whatever is hurtful to them, the strong call mean whatever they deem too low for them to do. Both call good the contrast to their "bad". But it is evident, that the "good" of master-morality means something very different from the good of slave-morality. The master-morality is the genuine morality of all powerful and warlike tribes, the genuine morality of the Germanic nations, which once called him who stood first, *fruma* or *frum*, and for which the idea of moral goodness was identical with strength and efficiency. It is closely akin to the English conception of gentleman-like and lady-like which is an important relic of a pre-christian moral valuation. Master-morality is self-asserting, slave-morality self-denying, master-morality conquers and keeps, slave-morality renounces and loses.

Nietzsche's influence on German literature is manifold. The charm and the artistic perfection of his style are such that since about 1888 they have fascinated the German literary youth. The admiration of his works found the most varied expression. Whether a young poet[1] devotes sonnets to the philosopher:

> Ich les' es jauchzend, les' es tief bewegt,
> Was mit demantnem Griffel du geschrieben,

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[1] Johann Gottfried Oswald in Deutsche Dichtung ed. by Franzos Vol. XII. Berlin 1890, p. 173.

whether another in a novelette thus describes a room of an old fashioned inn: "It was something special, this old common room. It possessed its hidden depths and dangerous secrets like a book by Friedrich Nietzsche"[1], or whether Hermann Conradi's novel *Adam Mensch*[2] and his pamphlet *Wilhelm II. und die junge Generation*[3], or a pamphlet of Leo Berg's[4] betray only too distinctly the influence of Nietzsche's aphoristical style; — all these features show the same thing. Very soon Nietzsche's ideas and ideals influence German lyrics. In the chapter *Von Kind und Ehe* of *Also sprach Zarathustra* Nietzsche had drawn from his new ethical ideal conclusions for modern love — and so early as 1893 Richard Dehmel gives that new love ideal expression in his poem *Venus Madonna*[5]; in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886) Nietzsche had proclaimed his master-morality, and in 1895 Johannes Grosse in his *Buch der Erinnerungen* inscribes a whole chapter *Herrenmoral* and sings in the poem *Religion der Liebe* the praise of the new ideal of a higher development of humanity by the social selection of the best. Nietzsche's superior personality, by which similar individualities are irresistibly attracted, and the charm of a great artist which places his works almost on a level of attractiveness with works of fiction, and the power of that thought which springs from the very lifeblood of his time, all tend to produce open followers and at the same time that unconscious bias of opinion which is strongest where it is disowned. It is not difficult to see that influence, for, in a democratic age like ours, anti-democratic tendencies will at once be denounced,

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[1] Otto Erich Hartleben. Die Geschichte vom gastfreien Pastor. Freie Bühne. Juli 1893, p. 808.
[2] Leipzig 1888.
[3] Leipzig 1889.
[4] Das sexuelle Problem in der modernen Literatur, Zweite Aufl. Berlin 1890.
[5] Aber die Liebe. München 1893, p. 216.

and the gospel of physiological superiority will meet with that immortal Chandala-hatred, which is so powerful because it is disguised unter the mask of humility and renunciation.

Whilst, ten years ago, the German literary youth stood to some extent under the influence of that spiritualism which tries to drive out health and the joy of life as hate-worthy vices, and of socialism which hates everything that is great and superior, whilst Schopenhauer and Wagner, Hartmann and Du Prel, Marx and Bebel, had a considerable number of followers among them, and whilst the songs of social pessimism were frequently only a hairbreadth distant from social democracy, and spiritualistic and mystic tendencies were by no means rare, since that time most of the younger poets, under the influence of scientific monism, of Darwinism and of Nietzsche's aristocratic ideals have been thrown into an altogether different line. The spreading of scientific monism is inimical to all mythological relics of olden times, and Nietzsche's ethical theory is inimical to all democratic and humane aspirations. In more than one case it is possible to study that evolution in a single volume. The best instance is Johannes Grosse's *Buch der Erinnerungen*[1], a work of rare lyrical power and energy of thought and expression. For Grosse our time is the age[2]

> Wo eine mächtige Religion
> Zum letzten Kampfe schreitet
> Und an der neuen
> Noch das Jahrhundert schwanger geht.

It is, of course, impossible to foresee the ultimate results of the fermentation of German thought in our age upon lyrics,

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[1] Strassburg i. E. 1895.
[2] p. 216.

and poetry and art generally. But there will be few nations the lyrics of which have, in the same measure, kept step with the mental progress of the time, and after what has been done in the German lyrics of the last quarter of a century, there can be no doubt that the aesthetic and poetic faculties of Germany are fully abreast of the tasks of the time. German lyrics of today are still on the way upwards, as are German poetry and German thought generally. The position which the German of to-day takes towards his own nation has been well expressed by Heinrich Hart, in the *Vorgesang* to his *Lied der Menschheit*, where he thus addresses his people[1]:

Volk, das ich liebe, Volk, an dessen Kraft
Ich glaube, du der Menschheit Blut und Saft,
Du grüne Eiche, schwellend von Geäst,
Dein Haupt trinkt Himmelsglanz, gen Ost und West
Streckst du die Arme, erzgeschmiedet drückt
Dein Fuss des Erdreichs Kern, kein Sturmwind rückt
Zur Seite dich um einer Spanne Raum,
Durch deine Blätter rauscht ein Frühlingstraum,
Aus deinem Wipfel klingt es wie Geläut:
Es kommt ein Morgen, der die Welt erneut.

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[1] Jungdeutschland, herausgegeben von W. Arent. Friedenau (Berlin) und Leipzig 1886, p. 178.

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